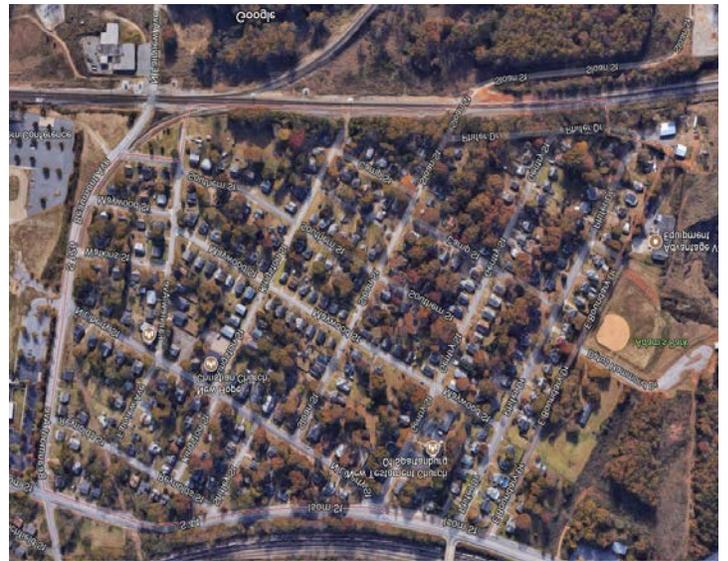


# Historic Beaumont Village



## A Neighborhood Plan

Proposed by Clemson University

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## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Executive Summary**

This neighborhood plan focuses on the historic Beaumont Mill neighborhood located in Northeast Spartanburg. The plan is a combined effort by a group of City and Regional Planning master's students at Clemson University, as part of the Fall 2017 Studio Class. The plan was created based on observations gathered in the field, as well as community input. In this plan, we hope to further the wellbeing of Beaumont residents and the vibrancy of their community.

Beaumont Mill is a mill village neighborhood that formed surrounding the Beaumont textile mill. The textile mill opened soon after the Civil War and offered steady employment for many. While the final mill closed in 1999, the neighborhood remained an important living center for many with long term ties to the mill. Today, there are roughly 300 households in the village, where the average household income is \$43,000 (Business Analyst ArcGIS). The racial makeup of the neighborhood is fairly mixed with 64% white and 27% black. 56% of housing units were built before 1940 (U.S. Census, 2010). Because of the historic nature of the neighborhood, the City designated the neighborhood as historic, creating a set of guidelines to maintain historic charm of the homes.

Before forming the plan for Beaumont Mill, community input was gathered. Several themes emerged from the Beaumont Mill Neighborhood Association meeting. First, we heard strong resident desire for improvement of public spaces in Beaumont. Although Adam's Park is already present within Beaumont, the park is isolated and not conveniently located for many. Residents would like to see additional park space in their neighborhood. We also heard several residents bring up traffic calming. They mentioned several intersections where motorists speed and glide through stop signs. They would like to see reduced speed and safer driving in their neighborhood. Finally, they mentioned the historic guidelines to which all Beaumont residents

are held accountable. There was confusion about the guidelines and disagreement over what they require.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was compiled by the team to summarize our findings from field observations and what we heard at the community meeting. The SWOT analysis includes feedback from neighborhood leader Marilyn Graves Kimple. Major strengths include the location and safety of the community, community pride and engagement, and the historic character. Weaknesses include road and sidewalk infrastructure, blighted homes, lack of green space, and lack of connectivity. Major opportunities include the ability to improve and build a relationship with the city, as well as the ability to connect to the nearby Drayton Mills Walking Trail. Major threats include funding sources for improvements.

Three strategies are recommended to address the issues we have observed in the Beaumont neighborhood. These strategies include maintaining community character, promoting community identity, and enhancing community health and safety. To maintain community character, we recommend adding a welcome sign at the entrance of the neighborhood, on either end of North Liberty Avenue. Another way to improve community character is through improvement to the historic guidelines process. Neighborhood leaders need to become more familiar with the historic guidelines so that they can answer questions when issues arise, and potentially serve as an additional point of contact, so residents don't have to just rely on city staff. To promote community identity, we recommend adding historic Beaumont neighborhood signs at certain key intersections. Finally, to enhance community health and safety, we have made several recommendations for park locations within the neighborhood. We have also identified locations for traffic calming measures.

## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Introduction**

Beaumont Mill Village is a historically designated neighborhood in South Carolina, with around 300 homes. Beaumont residents are diverse, including a mix of ethnicities, ages, and income. Another type of diversity within the neighborhood is the presence of landlords and renters, as well as home-owners. Beaumont is a fairly vibrant neighborhood within the city; however, there are certainly areas for improvement. Observations of a Beaumont Neighborhood Community Association meeting revealed insight into Beaumont resident perspectives. Residents are interested in improving their neighborhood through improvement of amenities. They want improved public space, including multiple pocket parks or a larger, central community park. They would also like to see improved infrastructure, specifically infrastructure to provide traffic calming to key intersections within the neighborhood. In addition to their hopes for the future, residents have some concerns about the existing historic designation guidelines. Not all residents are on board with these guidelines. Overall, Beaumont has many strengths and valuable community assets. These assets, as well as opportunities for improvement, are included in this report.

## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Existing Conditions**

### *Community Meeting*

On October 5th, there was a Beaumont Mill Neighborhood association meeting attended by the authors of this document. Unfortunately, Joe Kowal, the neighborhood association president, was unable to attend the meeting. However, we were able to meet with the vice president, Marilyn Graves Kimple, before the meeting to go over the agenda and what was going to be discussed. The meeting itself took place in a church within the neighborhood. This provided for a higher resident turnout than expected. There were around 20 very vocal residents present at the meeting, who provided our team with insight into their community. There was a mixture of men and women, and also older and younger individuals. All of the residents who attended were Caucasian.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Clemson University Studio group was given the floor to introduce ourselves and get feedback from the community. The first item that the residents brought up as a need for the community was a neighborhood pocket park. They expressed that there are no immediately available public space within the neighborhood, but it was something they are looking to acquire. They do currently have Adam's Park, located at the back of the neighborhood, but the residents expressed that they feel isolated from it, and that it needs increased safety measures. Residents also expressed that the street by the basketball court should be closed, because lighting and safety in this location are a pressing issue for the community in that location.

While the safety of Adam's Park is a source of concern for the village residents, they would like to keep it intact. Meeting attendees mentioned that they enjoyed having kids and organizations use the baseball field, and would like to have it maintained. When the possibility

of transforming the park into an urban farm was mentioned, the residents expressed no interest. Rather, the residents were interested in creating a community garden or other types of pocket parks within the neighborhood. There was also interest among community members to create a dog park within the Village. Many of the residents expressed an interest in demolishing dilapidated houses to create these pocket parks within the community. Furthermore, they expressed to us that the open patch of land off of Isom Street should not be used for a park because the traffic on that street is too heavy. Overall, the residents expressed a real need for a park within their community.

Next, the conversation moved to the topic of traffic calming. Residents complained about speeding on several streets, including North Liberty, Beaumont Avenue, and Phifer Drive. Attendees expressed support for speed bumps. Crosswalks on Beaumont Avenue to aid in pedestrian traffic were mentioned as well.

Finally, the historic guidelines were discussed. This topic generated dissent between the meeting attendees. One mother explained that she had a negative experience regarding the guidelines. She explained that she wanted to change the color on the shutters of her home and her application was rejected. Another meeting attendee mentioned that this was a mistake and that the regulations do not affect facade colors. There seemed to be a lot of confusion about what is written in the guidelines. This led to further discussion, with one attendee backing complaints about the regulations, followed by a fourth person saying that he fully supported the guidelines and that they kept the neighborhood looking nice. He suggested that the regulations be studied, but not eliminated. It was also evident from this heated discussion that there were differing opinions between newer residents and residents who have grown up in Beaumont Mill.

Additionally, there were conflicting ideas about the guidelines from homeowners and renters, or people who rent the homes.

Overall, the meeting was very insightful for our group. While there was both consensus and disagreement on ideas, the meeting provided us with a starting point of issues to address. As a group, we incorporated the needs and wants of the community into the following goals and plans.

### *Community Image*

The current image of the historic Beaumont Mill Village as a whole is not a detriment to its value. According to community residents, Beaumont is a very safe neighborhood with low crime numbers and a citizenry that wants to be involved and updated on where their community is going. However, Beaumont is not taking full advantage of its assets to promote the village as a place where people throughout Spartanburg County would want to live. Beaumont is one of Spartanburg's oldest neighborhoods and one of the most intact remaining textile mill villages in South Carolina. Meaning that its historical significance provides a wonderful opportunity to promote the community. With over half of the homes in Beaumont being constructed before WWII, in 2011 the neighborhood received a local historic designation. Historic design guidelines were put in place to maintain the character of the village, setting it apart from other neighborhoods throughout the city, and furthering this opportunity.

However, many of Beaumont's own residents do not know what these historic guidelines entail and what they mean for their homes or neighborhood. In the community meeting, this fact became obvious and backs up the claims of neighborhood association president Joe Kowal, that the deeds to the historic houses in Beaumont do not even make mention of their historic

significance or protections. This makes it difficult to inform potential new residents of the uniqueness of the place they are looking to move into.

In addition to the lack of official documentation of the historic designation for residents, there are no external communicators, such as signs, that indicate Beaumont as a historic site for visitors or potential residents. As seen below, the only sign that even contains the name of the Village is on Beaumont Avenue, away from the major thoroughfare of Isom Street, where most traffic passes the village. This sign is also not near the intersection of Beaumont and North Liberty Street, the Village's most traveled and utilized road.

**Figure 1: Beaumont Mill Village Neighborhood Sign**



Coupled with seclusion of the neighborhood caused by the railroad tracks that surround it on three sides, the current efforts to promote the village fall short in their goal. If the City and Beaumont residents want to achieve the goal of promoting Beaumont as a quality place to live for all, changes must be made.

### *Neighborhood Park*

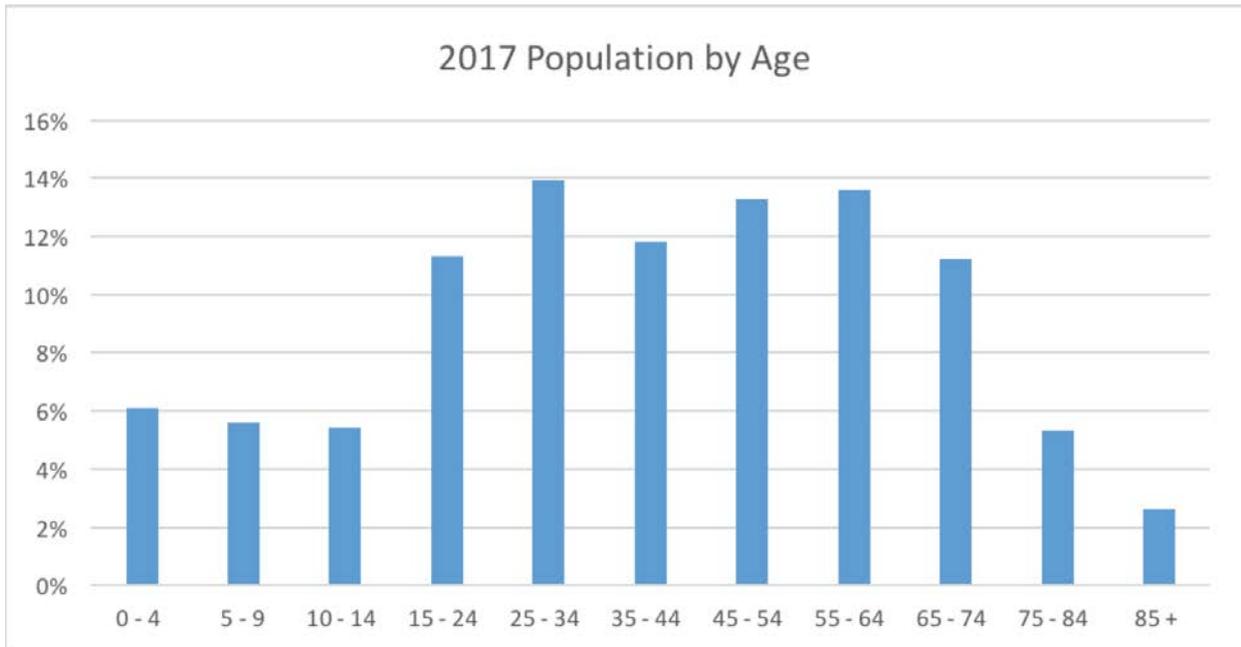
After speaking with Beaumont Mill Village residents at the community meeting, the residents' desire for pocket parks was clear. Beaumont residents are very concerned with connectivity and access to a neighborhood playground. As mentioned in the literature, access to natural surroundings is proven to substantially improve physical, mental and social health; therefore, the implementation of a small park into a local neighborhood is undoubtedly important (Wilson, 2011). A safe and accessible area for the neighborhood children to gather and play is something the neighborhood is lacking, and resolving this issue is of high priority to Beaumont residents. They do not want their children's only option to be playing in the neighborhood streets.

The total vacancy rate within Beaumont is 19% (58 homes); however, this statistic includes houses for rent, houses for sale, houses sold but not occupied, houses that are utilized for seasonal/recreational/occasional use, and houses that are vacant for "other" reasons (Business Analyst ArcGIS). It is important to consider vacant homes when thinking of possible pocket park locations, and all types of vacancy must be considered. Sometimes a vacant house, especially one that is not in prime condition, can be demolished and transformed into a green space with a playground for children and other residents to enjoy. However, there are very few buildings that can be demolished for a neighborhood pocket park within Beaumont. Because of the neighborhood's historic designation, any demolition must be approved by the City of

Spartanburg's Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB). According to Martin Livingston, the Neighborhood Services Director, the demolition of these historic buildings is difficult because of all of the procedures the City must go through to complete the process. But, all hope is not lost. There are currently vacant lots and areas on track for demolition, as well as areas that will be vacant in the future. All of this can be taken into consideration for a future pocket park location.

As mentioned above, a pocket park, or parks, throughout the Beaumont Mill neighborhood would benefit the fairly large number of children that reside in the neighborhood. 70 out of 246 households include children. That is 30% of the total households (U.S. Census, 2010). While only approximately 12% of the neighborhood population is made up of children between the ages of 5 and 14, the highest percentage of the population falls into the age range of 25 and 34 (U.S. Census, 2010). The age range of 25 and 34 is important in terms of neighborhood parks because it can be assumed that some of the individuals within this range may be having children in the near future. Planning for this change and an increase in the amount of neighborhood children is an important factor to consider. The graph below, **Figure 2**, displays the age range within Beaumont.

**Figure 2: Beaumont 2017 Population by Age (U.S. Census, 2010)**



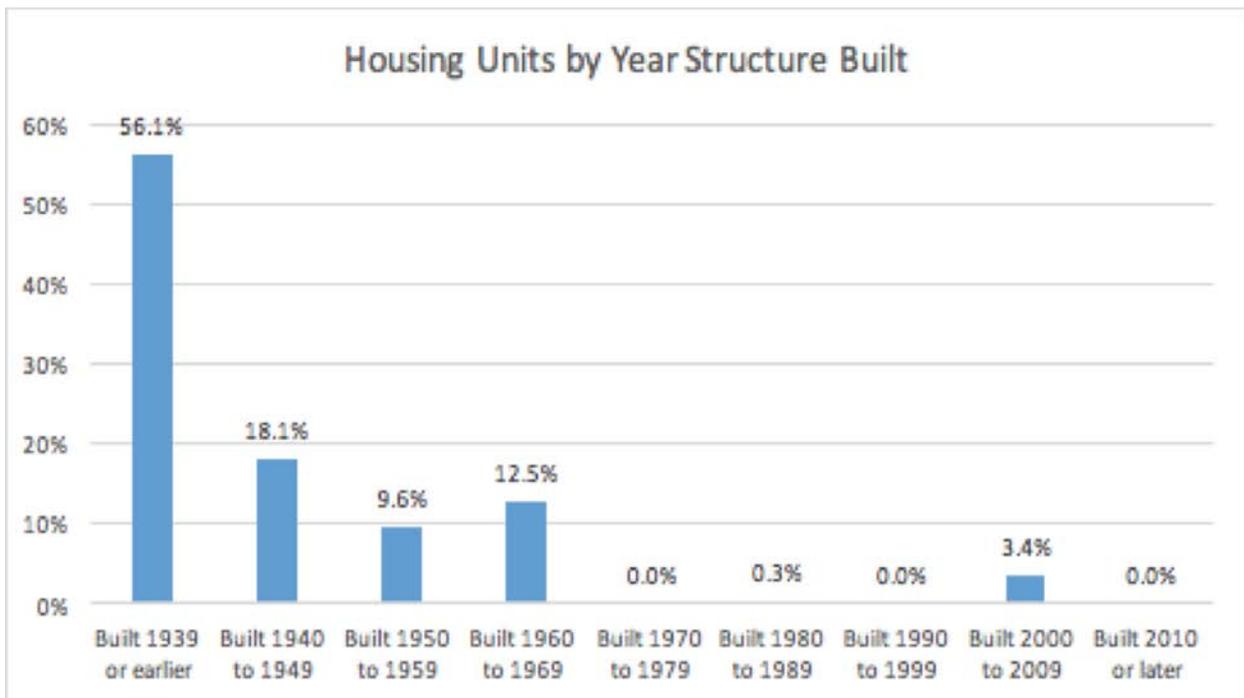
Adam’s Park is comprised of a baseball field, a basketball court and is located adjacent to Beaumont. However, this park lacks connectivity, regulation and playground equipment for children. With that being said, at the October community meeting, the majority of residents stressed that they feel the park is useful in terms of baseball and basketball. They do not want to see Adam’s Park turned into anything else, such as the suggested urban garden.

### *Historic Guidelines*

Beaumont Mill is an older neighborhood with over 56% of the homes built earlier than 1939 and over 95% built before 1970 (U.S. Census, 2010). **Figure 3** demonstrates the breakdown of homes by age. Due to the old age of homes, the village implemented historic guidelines. Beaumont Mill’s historic guidelines present several challenges to residents. First, some of the residents are against the guidelines. Second, residents against the guidelines create conflict with those that support them. One thing that was very apparent from attending the

Beaumont Mill community meeting is that there is a difference of opinion between owners who occupy their houses and owners who rent out their houses. In 2017, 46.7% of housing units are owner occupied and 36.2% are renter occupied (Business Analyst ArcGIS). This is a fairly even split causes disagreement though the different needs and desires for each type of residency. The owner occupied homes are usually people who have grown up in the area, and whose ancestors have been in Beaumont for generations. They are keen to keep the historic guidelines in place to preserve their history. On the other hand, owners of rental properties are looking to get the most bang out of their buck, and are not in favor of investing more money than they need to into their properties.

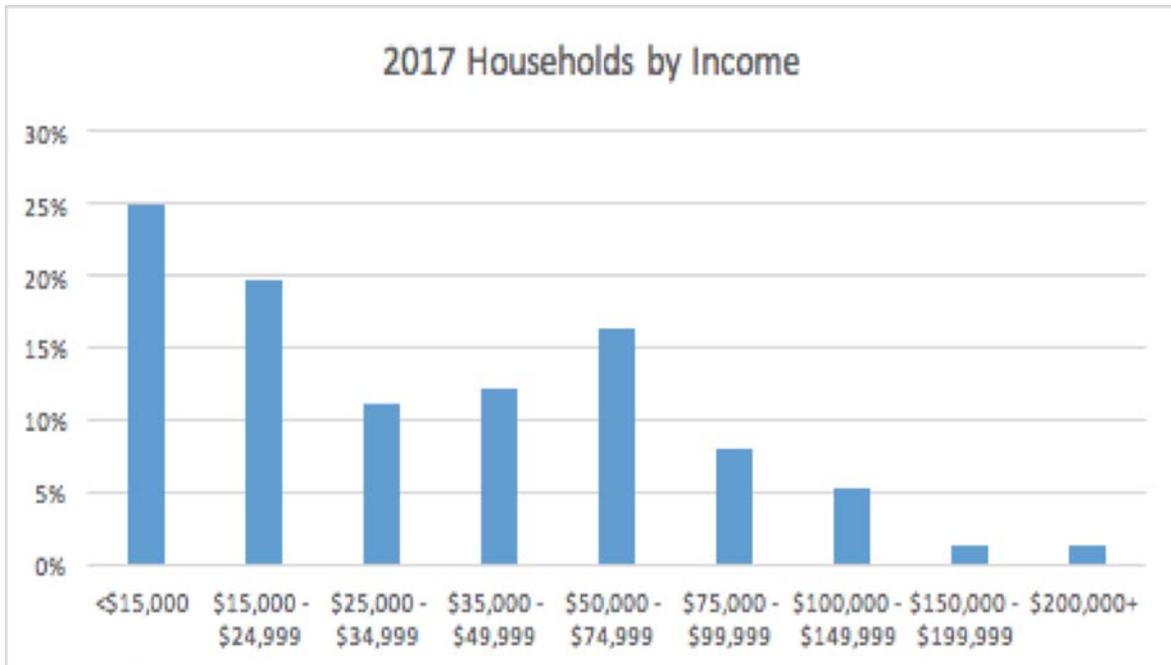
**Figure 3: Housing Units by Year Built (U.S. Census 2010)**



Additionally, the average home value in 2017 was \$107, 267 (Business Analyst ArcGIS).

A breakdown of income is included in **Figure 4** below. A large concern for residents could be that they do not want to invest more money into their home for repairs than it is even worth.

**Figure 4: 2017 Beaumont Mill Households by Income (U.S. Census 2010)**



Another factor that plays a role in the neighborhood residents disapproval of the guidelines is income. This financial burden was also expressed by neighborhood residents as a threat. Heuer (2007), found that historic districts can place a heavy financial burden on residents. People who wish to upgrade or repair their homes, may not have the money to pay for the higher standard of materials that the historic guidelines mandate. When looking at Beaumont Mill’s average household income, just \$ 43,983 in 2017, it is easy to understand that these higher costs for materials may not be a viable option for residents to use, even if they wanted to follow guideline rules (Business Analyst ArcGIS). It makes more sense to residents to pay for the things

they need with their often limited income, than to spend it on higher material costs. These high costs and lower incomes may also play a role in why some homes in the neighborhood are vacant or appear dilapidated.

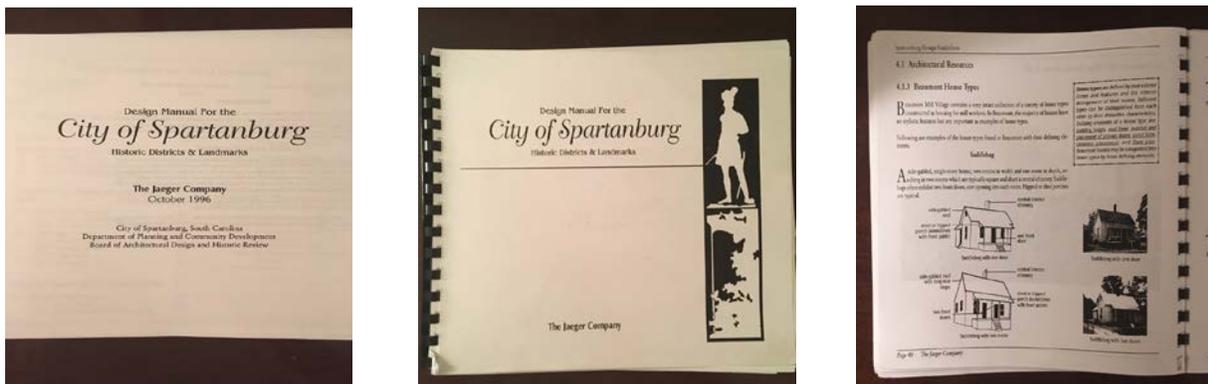
One of the biggest problems identified was the large disconnect between what the guidelines actually say, and what the residents think they say. This is not totally surprising, as Heuer (2007) also found this issue in his study. Heuer found that the lack of knowledge on the guidelines created a sense of uncertainty around the residents about what could and could not be done in the neighborhood. This uncertainty caused confusion and resentment among the residents, not unlike what we discovered while talking to the residents of Beaumont Mill. While in our community meeting, the residents had conflicting stories about how the approval process to make changes to their homes works. Some argued that the process was straight-forward and not confusing at all. While others, argued that they were given the runaround by officials and ultimately their requests were denied. They also claimed that there was no good reason for the denial. The meeting escalated quickly into disagreement about whether or not the guidelines were even useful if no one can make any changes. It became very clear that the lack of historic guideline education is a major problem for the village and something that needs to be addressed.

### *Design Guidelines*

As mentioned above, we observed pushback and difference of opinion about the historic guidelines for Beaumont from multiple residents. There seemed to be a lack of knowledge about what was permitted according to the guidelines, as well as a lack of consensus about the value of the guidelines to residents. If these issues are not addressed, we feel that the city will continue to experience challenges to the guidelines. Increased knowledge about the guidelines and how they can help the neighborhood is a good starting point for Beaumont residents.

The City of Spartanburg passed a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1995 by the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (Design Manual). This ordinance established the Historic Architecture Review Board (HARB), a commission tasked with carrying out the historic ordinance by reviewing applications for alterations to homes in the neighborhood. Two documents were created to support this process: ‘Design Manual for the City of Spartanburg’ and ‘Design Guidelines for Beaumont Mill Village’. The Design Manual is an extensive document that catalogs architectural styles in the historic neighborhoods in Spartanburg, including Hampton Heights, Beaumont Mill Village, and Downtown Spartanburg. The design manual also includes rehabilitation best practices, recommendations for new construction, tips for conducting preservation projects, etc. The design guidelines for Beaumont are more specific to the neighborhood itself. This document is expressly written for the HARB members as a reference when assessing major and minor works applications. Both documents provide an in-depth review of expectations for historic preservation within the neighborhood. Examples of these design manuals can be seen in **Figure 5**, below.

**Figure 5: Design Guidelines**



Although the justifications for historic preservation are made evident in the design guidelines and City of Spartanburg design manual, these justifications have not necessarily been disseminated to the community. Public comments on the guidelines range from confusion and frustration to a desire to eliminate the guidelines all together. The potential for the guidelines to improve property values over time is one sound justification for keeping them. Research by Leinchenko et al. (2001) suggests that a major justification for neighborhood historic designation is appreciation in property value, a correlation which is supported by research. Leinchenko's work (2001) points out that historic designation can have either positive or negative impacts on home and property values but that such designation tends to have a positive impact. His work examined the impacts of historic designation on nine neighborhoods in Texas and found that historic preservation resulted in a 5 to 20 percent increase in property values across research sites. Of note, properties listed on national and state historic registers saw more positive effects on property values than sites listed on local historic registers (Leinchenko 2001).

Although the design guidelines, and accompanying approval process for making changes to homes, is not favored by all, we recommend keeping the guidelines in place. As the character of Beaumont improves with continued investment, neighborhood pride and sense of place will continue to grow. Rather than eliminating the guidelines all together, the city should work to publicize existing literature more widely.

### *Traffic Calming*

In regards to transportation and traffic, there are several important features to explore in the current conditions. As mentioned above, the neighborhood is roughly a quarter square mile, with around 300 households (Business Analyst ArcGIS). Knowing how many people are in the neighborhood affects the amount of auto and pedestrian traffic in the area. There are also three

churches and one business that will facilitate a modest amount of traffic. Additionally, Adam's Park brings in a steady inflow of traffic from outside of the neighborhood, with people coming to use the baseball field for recreation activities. Other automobiles use the neighborhood as a way to bypass traffic on Isom and Beaumont. The Spartanburg Regional Healthcare Corporate Campus is across the street from Beaumont Ave. and brings in regular traffic to the area. About 24% or about 124 residents are under 18, meaning that they are typically traveling to school every week day (U.S. Census, 2010).

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has determined that there are multiple classes of roads that are important for better understanding the neighborhood. Beaumont Avenue is considered a major collector, which means it is a moderate capacity road and is used to connect residential properties. Isom Street is classified as minor arterial, which means it is a high capacity urban road that connects a high level road to city centers. On Beaumont Avenue, where it passes the front of the neighborhood, approximately 3,500 vehicles pass through daily (SCDOT). The other 14 streets in the neighborhood are considered neighborhood roads and do not generate enough traffic to be counted by the SCDOT. One concern that has been expressed by the community, is the increase in traffic caused by outsiders speeding through the neighborhood as a way to bypass typically busier intersections.

The 20 different intersections allow for many different opportunities to facilitate traffic and potentially dangerous interactions for both pedestrians and autos. A total of five intersections along Liberty St., four on Isom St., and five on Beaumont Ave. provide traffic calming opportunity. Phifer, Gentry, Liberty, Sloan, Fairview and Liberty have no stops at intersections and have continual flow, while other streets alternate between stop signs at some intersections while there are none at others. While a majority of roads have adequate sidewalks, there are very

few crosswalks or pedestrian facilities. Furthermore, some individual houses have driveways, carports or garages for personal vehicles, but most do not. Thus, street parking is the primary method of parking in the neighborhood.

### *SWOT Analysis*

The project team completed a SWOT analysis between the information-gathering phase and the recommendations phase during which we organized the thoughts about Beaumont. In a SWOT analysis, a subject of study is analyzed from a perspective of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In the analysis below, we examine and summarize these criteria for Beaumont. Our analysis includes feedback from neighborhood association vice president Marilyn Graves Kimple, as well as from our classroom leader and PhD student, Jermaine Durham. The SWOT analysis provides a useful summary of existing neighborhood conditions and served as the springboard for idea generation in coming up with recommendations for Beaumont Mill Village.

### *Strengths*

- **Historic character:** The historic character is a strength in Beaumont because it adds charm to the homes. This is a point of pride for residents. They feel connected to the historic nature of their homes and want to preserve the look and feel of the neighborhood.
- **Community involvement/participation:** Residents of Beaumont are very involved in their community - their community meetings are well attended and residents feel empowered to speak up and provide feedback about what is going on in their community.
- **Community pride:** locals identify with the neighborhood and are proud of its heritage. Citizens are active in the community and want to better the neighborhood.

- Safety: Beaumont is a relatively safe neighborhood. There is not high incidence of crime as reported at their monthly neighborhood association meeting. Additionally, community members seem to have a positive relationship with the local police force.
- Sidewalks: Sidewalks provide walkability for residents in Beaumont. Sufficient sidewalk infrastructure is located throughout the neighborhood.
- Adam's Park baseball field: After gathering feedback from the community meeting we realized that the baseball field is a strength for the Beaumont Village, residents say that they use the field and that although the park is isolated, they still like the baseball field and do not want it to be removed.

#### *Weaknesses*

- Road infrastructure: road infrastructure is generally older and in need of repair. Many areas lack signage, lights or crosswalks.
- Traffic: Beaumont Ave. and Isom Street are heavily trafficked roads that make pedestrian and neighborhood life dangerous.
- Blighted homes: Blighted homes make the neighborhood less attractive to both residents and visitors. Visually, these homes take away from the charm that Beaumont has attempted to create through historic guidelines. Blighted homes also lower land values in the area and can create a sense of Beaumont being a lower quality neighborhood. Also, these blighted homes are usually vacant which can open the door for potential squatters. In 2017, 16.67% of houses were vacant in the neighborhood (Business Analyst ArcGIS).
- Lack of public green space: There is not a current pocket park or passive park location within the neighborhood that residents can enjoy. Adam's Park is adjacent to Beaumont;

however, as mentioned multiple times before, access and regulation of this park is lacking.

- Lack of connectivity: There is a lack of connectivity and walkability present within and around the Beaumont neighborhood. While there are sidewalks in the community, the location of the neighborhood between railroad tracks and major roads make the residents feel isolated from those around them.
- Confusion related to historic guidelines: Community members have expressed a desire for changes in terms of the Beaumont Mill Historic Guidelines. Unfortunately, residents do not seem to agree on the way in which to address the guidelines. Certain residents do not want the guidelines in place at all. Other residents want the guidelines to remain intact; however, they would prefer a lessening of the strictness. This lack of agreement only intensifies the issues associated with the guidelines. Confusion related to the historic guidelines was brought to light in the October neighborhood meeting. It is clear that many residents are unclear on the ins and outs of the guidelines; therefore, assumptions are being made based on hearsay.

### *Opportunities*

- Location of churches (3): having three active churches in the neighborhood presents the opportunity for high levels of civic and community engagement.
- Location of the neighborhood: The location of the neighborhood gives the area the prime location and access to many places within the greater Spartanburg area. Nearby the neighborhood are Wofford and Converse College, as well as a medical center and downtown.

- Connect to Drayton Mills walking trail: The Drayton Mills walking trail is only a short distance from the neighborhood. Connecting the neighborhood to the trail would allow connectivity to many more areas of the community for pedestrians.
- Relationship with the City of Spartanburg: The Beaumont Mill Neighborhood has strong leadership, including Joe Kowal and Marilyn Graves Kimple, longtime residents of Beaumont. Their relationship and involvement with the City of Spartanburg is apparent as well.

### *Threats*

- Funding Sources for Improvements: We are not confident that we are going to be able to identify funding sources for all of our proposed ideas. Funding is often a hurdle in terms of project implementation.
- Owner occupied vs. renter occupied ratio and historic guideline acceptance: This ratio is a threat to the village because the village is ultimately split down the middle between people who own their property and people who rent it. This creates issues when the historic guidelines are brought up because, after speaking with neighborhood leadership, we have learned that owners and renters have different objectives in the neighborhood. Renters, and the associated landlords, have a more short-term investment in the neighborhood whereas homeowners are more likely to support regulations to protect neighborhood quality (but at the same time require investment in their homes). This is an area where we cannot achieve 100% neighborhood consensus.
- Adam's Park safety: Adam's Park is located on the edge of the neighborhood and all of the houses next to it are faced away. This makes the park very secluded and a prime area for crime. The park also lacks lights, making it even more dangerous at night.

Furthermore, the basketball court is located down a hill and out of eyesight from the street.

## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Goals and Strategies**

Three main goals have been identified while working with the Beaumont Mill Village neighborhood: maintain community character, promote community identity and enhance community health and safety. Strategies developed to achieve each of these goals are crucial for the improvement of the Beaumont neighborhood.

Maintaining community character and identity can be addressed via the improvement of the community image throughout Beaumont, as well as increased education in terms of historic guidelines. Community image is important to the overall success and promotion of historic Beaumont Mill Village. That being said, there are a few small steps that can be made that will have a large impact on informing both residents, potential residents, and visitors about the significance of Beaumont. The first step is a small landscaping project at the entrance to the village off of Beaumont Avenue. This façade of the neighborhood faces the old mill where Spartanburg Regional Healthcare Center and the offices of the Southern Conference now operate, as well as highway 176, a major thoroughfare in reaching downtown Spartanburg and Converse College. This means that an upgrade of this façade would allow travelers who normally would not pay attention to or pass the village to see a beautified location that may interest them to visit and perhaps even live. This project will start with simply planting flowers or other flora along a dirt embankment just to the right of North Liberty Street when viewing the village from the old mill. Ideally, this will be expanded with success, but furthering these efforts will require cooperation with residents who live in the homes of the village along Beaumont Avenue.

A second simple method of community promotion is the placement of a large, double-sided welcome sign at the main entrance point(s) to the Village. The neighborhood association

has already started this process, procuring some funds and beginning a conversation with a local business located in the neighborhood that makes signs of this sort. There are two viable locations for this sign, both at each end of North Liberty Avenue, either at its intersection with Isom Street or Beaumont Avenue. These locations are ideal because North liberty Street is by far the most traveled road in Beaumont and would provide the most opportunity for individuals to see this sign as they are coming into the village. The location at the intersection of North Liberty and Isom would of course provide the most potential for eyes on the sign, as Isom is far more utilized than Beaumont Avenue and the sign will likely not be able to be seen form the highly traveled highway 176 across the old mill land from the neighborhood.

A final proposal to promote Beaumont is the location of signage on top of street signs at main intersections throughout the village. These signs would designate the community as a historic neighborhood. A tentative list of these intersections includes:

- Beaumont Avenue at Southern, Maywood, Watkins, N Liberty, Reynolds, and Isom Streets. As these are all located at entrances to the village.
- Isom Street at Shirley and N Liberty streets as well as Phifer and E. Boundary drives for the same reason listed above.
- North Liberty Street at Sloan and Kingston streets, as well as Fairview Avenue
- Maywood Street at Gentry, Sloan, and Kingston streets
- Southern Street at Gentry, Sloan, and Kingston streets as well as Fairview Avenue

North Liberty, Maywood, and Southern streets make up the three major roads that run throughout the neighborhood. Ultimately the number of locations that will receive these designation signs will depend on funding, but this list is intended as a starting point for considerations. The signs in question will read simply “historic neighborhood” as to avoid

conflict with other neighborhoods in Spartanburg that may want similar signage, but do not have the same historic designation. However, they will be effective enough in communicating their message. Examples of similar signs from other locations can be seen below in **Figure 6**.

**Figure 6: Historic Designation Signage**



These changes, while seemingly small, can have a huge impact of promoting Beaumont as a place of significance where residents can be proud to live. The map below, **Map 1**, summarizes the above.

## Map 1: Signage Locations



As mentioned above, increased education of historic guidelines can also aid in this increased community character and identity. After assessing the current conditions of the community and speaking with Natalia Rosario, Planner 3 with the City of Spartanburg, it has become clear that our approach to addressing the historic guidelines in Beaumont is to implement an education plan. While there is some unrest from residents regarding the guidelines, the fact that they were recently enacted and voted on by the residents will make them impossible to really change within the span of this project. Additionally, as both Martin Livingston the Neighborhood Services Director for the City of Spartanburg and Natalia Rosario pointed out, once you start making changes to historic guidelines, they no longer do the intended job of maintaining historic integrity. Furthermore, the lack of unity among the residents regarding the guidelines will also make them difficult to address in any way other than education.

In terms of how we are looking to educate residents, our approach is two-fold. First, we want to make and distribute a flyer really detailing the guidelines and what you can and cannot do with them. This means breaking the rules down to their simplest form that is easy to understand for everyone. Our intent is to also include explicit examples of projects, so the residents can really gain a sense of the options available to them.

In addition to the flyer, we also are proposing a community meeting between the residents and the City. The intent is that after the flyer has been sent out and the residents have had time to look it over, a meeting will be conducted where city officials will be present to answer questions residents have. Our hope is that these two combined efforts will eliminate confusion among the residents and hopefully reduce some of the negative feelings residents have towards the guidelines.

The proposing of a neighborhood pocket park and increased regulation of Adam's Park will aid in the enhancing of community health and safety. Access to such neighborhood amenities will provide the potential for this increased health and safety. There are four potential park locations that will be explained in more detail in the implantation section of this plan. After assessing the current conditions and resident input on Adam's Park, multiple possibilities are present. Residents expressed opposition to an urban garden in place of the Adam's Park baseball field. However, they would like see urban gardens in vacant lots throughout the neighborhood, rather than in Adam's Park. The park cannot be moved. If the residents like certain aspects of the park and want to see it remain in service, then connectivity must be addressed. Possible paths to Adam's Park, as well as increased pocket park presence throughout the remainder of the neighborhood, are two possible solutions to the current connectivity issue. If the park had increased and improved regulation, residents believe that many of their safety concerns would be

resolved. If the budget allowed, playground equipment could very easily be purchased and placed near the baseball field, so that young children could enjoy playing while the games are being played.

Traffic calming measures will also enhance community safety. Due to the current conditions explored in earlier sections, data and research on existing literature and best practices, as well as considering the political and economic limitations of the neighborhood, there are a few policy recommendations that can be made. The busiest streets within the neighborhood (excluding Beaumont and Isom), include Liberty and Maywood. These roads are utilized especially by outsiders trying to bypass the busy intersection at Isom and Beaumont, while traveling from North to South. One way to slow traffic on these roads would be to install stop signs at each intersection, where there currently are none. Stop signs encourage drivers to pay attention and slow down, knowing that they are about to stop. More importantly, stop signs will make the area unattractive and discourage those trying to use the roads for cut-through traffic (Sorrell, 2017). While, there might be a more effective measure, such as changing street design to certain areas, stop signs are significantly less expensive, usually costing less than \$50 each, plus the cost of installation (Moeur, 2014).

Adding a speed hump is a possibility on Liberty St. and it has been expressed as a desire by the community. The County of Spartanburg already has a comprehensive plan for implementing speed humps. The road is eligible, but would require a petition, support from the Sheriff, a traffic study and proof that other measures cannot solve the issue. Even then, the installation is very dependent on when funding becomes available, which can cost up to \$6,900 (STRS). Thus, while speed humps are a possibility, signage should be the preferred choice.

In a similar fashion, other signage could also increase traffic safety. Posting speed limit signs on major roads, such as Beaumont and Isom, will remind riders of how to drive. Speed limits signs on Liberty, Maywood and Phifer would also be beneficial considering their traffic flow. “Children at play signs” near all parks, Boundary and Phifer, as well as the new park proposed in this plan, and churches on Liberty and Gentry would also be recommended. Crosswalks and increased pedestrian facilities can also be placed on busier intersections that see an increase of pedestrian traffic, such as on Liberty and Gentry, near the churches, as well as near present and future parks. While these recommendations might not be the flashiest, they are simple and cost effective given the neighborhood’s situation. The map below, **Map 2**, summarizes the above.

**Map 2: Traffic Calming Possibilities**



## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Implementation**

### ***Community Image***

The neighborhood association has already been in contact with Skyvision Signs, a business located within the confines of Beaumont, in regards to the production of the entrance sign for the neighborhood. Having such a relevant business to these goals located in the neighborhood is advantageous. This partnership should be further pursued for the final design and production of the historic designation street signs proposed for the neighborhood.

The neighborhood association has already made provisions from a grant from the Mary Black Foundation to fund the entrance sign, and perhaps similar provisions can be made for the street signs. If the funds are unavailable in this manner, a request can be made to the city for funding in a future fiscal year. Other methods of funding are being researched in the meantime. We hope to see the entrance sign installed within the next couple years, coinciding with the landscaping project completion. The historic street signs should ideally be funded and installed by the end of 2018. Hopefully they can be installed in time for the National Night Out, an event which the community has seen much success in the previous years.

Funding and implementation of the landscaping project on the façade of Beaumont presents an interesting opportunity. There are many local greenhouse nurseries in the Spartanburg area that are potential partners for this project. The closest one to the village itself is Creekside Garden and Nursery located just on the other side of Lawsons Fork Creek. This is a small local business and the partnership could benefit all involved. Other options for this partnership include: Piedmont Farm and Garden, Drew's Nursery, and Carolina Garden World; all local businesses located within a short distance of the neighborhood. Partnership should be selected off of affordability and availability of flora that is desired by the citizens of Beaumont.

Funding for this project can come directly from dues collected by the neighborhood association, given there is sufficient funds. If this method is not viable, perhaps a deal can be made with the partnered nursery for small advertising opportunities at the landscaping site in exchange for providing the plants. Outside of these options, further research is being done on potential external funding sources. We hope to see this project completed within the upcoming year, with an optional community-wide event taking place to improve the façade and locate the new entrance sign.

### ***Neighborhood Park***

A neighborhood pocket park is of high priority to Beaumont residents; therefore, a fairly achievable implementation process is good news to neighborhood residents. Once a park location is secure, park implementation can begin. This is not to say that the process is easy; however, with the proper steps towards implementation, a neighborhood park is an achievable goal for the Beaumont neighborhood.

When put in perspective, the timeframe for a neighborhood pocket park is a fairly short-term project. Some planning projects take years and years to implement. However, the time it will take to complete a neighborhood pocket park will vary based on the lot that is chosen for the park. If the selected park location is a lot that is already cleared, things will move along quicker. For example, the 400 Kingston Street location is a property that is condemned for housing code violations, and the City of Spartanburg is planning on proceeding with the demolition process. The timeframe for this pocket park will be shorter than that of a potential location that has an established business or church on it. This kind of property may involve eminent domain or the demolition process. Overall, the implementation of a pocket park should take no longer than approximately a year from the date of granted funding.

There are multiple key partners that are associated with the implementation of a neighborhood pocket park. The City of Spartanburg’s Planning Department, the City of Spartanburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, Beaumont residents, and any private property owners are all key partners throughout this process. These partners will remain fairly consistent throughout the park implementation process; however, some variation is possible.

The first potential park location contains a property that is condemned for housing code violations. The City of Spartanburg is planning on proceeding with the demolition process, creating availability for a potential pocket park. This property is not a central location; however, it has potential. See **Map 3** below. The 400 Kingston Street location will involve partners such as the City of Spartanburg and the City’s Parks and Recreation department.

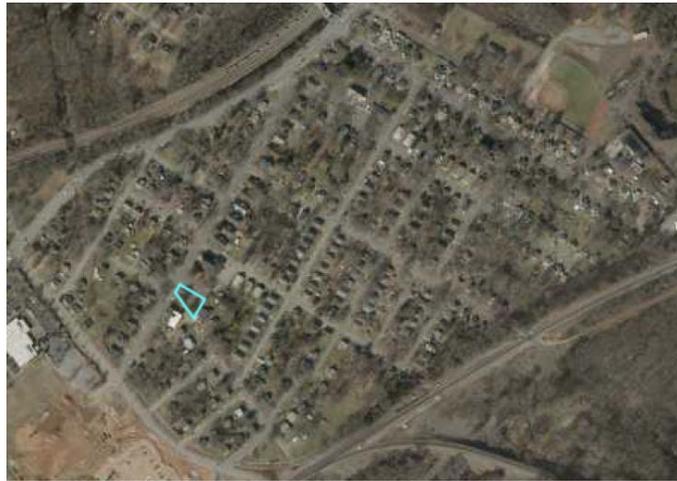
**Map 3: 400 Kingston Street Park Location**



695 N. Liberty Street is another potential pocket park location. This location also contains a property that is condemned for code violations. However, this property is owned by the church, and there has been indication that the church may have plans to turn this lot into a parking lot. With that being said, the City of Spartanburg would not use eminent domain in any

situation involving a church property. This property is not ideal; however, proper measures will be taken to ensure that all options are considered in terms of pocket park placement. See **Map 4** below. Therefore, the key partners in this option are the City of Spartanburg and the City's Parks and Recreation department.

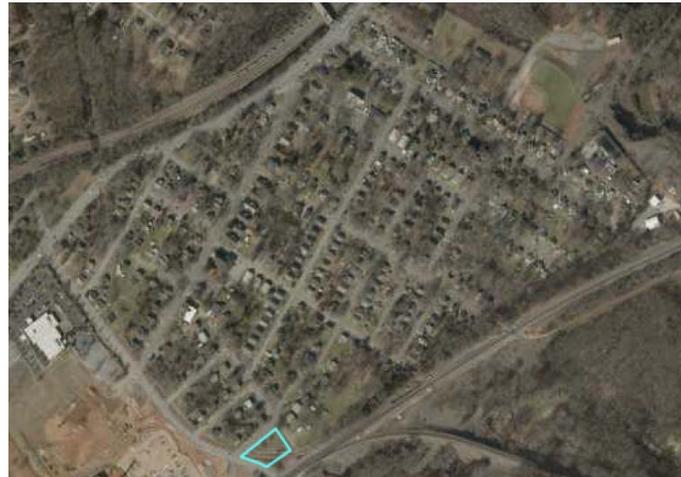
#### **Map 4: 695 N. Liberty Street Park Location**



Finally, Jimmy Gibbs, LLC is also a potential pocket park location. This location is owned by a private property owner and has potential for a neighborhood pocket park. The City of Spartanburg could attempt to use eminent domain here, or they may be able to purchase the park from the property owner. However, it is extremely important to consider the property's proximity to live railroad tracks. This fact is not to be taken lightly. If this location is selected for a pocket park, proper safety measures, such as fencing, need to be utilized to ensure the safety of the children and residents that plan to enjoy the park. Similar to the 400 Kingston Street location, this property has potential. The City of Spartanburg has indicated a current agreement with the owner of Jimmy Gibbs, LLC. This agreement will allow for the site to be used as a location for a future neighborhood pocket park. See **Map 5** below. The key partners here are the private

property owner, the City's planning department, the City's Parks and Recreation department, as well as the neighborhood residents.

### **Map 5: Jimmy Gibbs, LLC Park Location**



The funding for the implementation of these potential neighborhood pocket parks is going to be fairly universal no matter the selected park location. There are multiple funding options that should be taken into consideration when planning for neighborhood pocket park implementation. The PARD (Parks and Recreation Development Fund) grant program is an option that should be considered. This funding is a non-competitive reimbursable grant program for local governments to aid in providing recreational opportunities within the area. The Mary Black Foundation also provides funding for such implementation projects. The Mary Black Foundation promotes active living and community health. A neighborhood park can aid in the enhancement of these characteristics. The Spartanburg County Foundation is also dedicated to improving the lives of Spartanburg County residents. Increased physical activity through access to a neighborhood park can contribute to this improvement; therefore, funding may be available.

Other opportunities, such as City General Funds and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), are possible; however, they require approval from City Council.

### ***Historic Guidelines***

The plan to address Historic Guidelines in the Beaumont Mill Neighborhood is fairly simple to carry out. A flyer with express details of the historic guidelines and a meeting with appropriate city official(s) will not be expensive, or take long implement. In terms of the timeline, this could be implemented within the upcoming year. Key partners in both implementation and funding are the City of Spartanburg and the neighborhood association.

### ***Design Guidelines***

Supporting documentation for the design guidelines should also be more readily available for the neighborhood. The *Design Manual for the City of Spartanburg* should be shared with the Beaumont Mill Neighborhood Association. The city should make additional bound copies of this document and share it with Marilyn and Joe, leaders in the community. City planners may be able to work with a local advertising or printing agency to get a donated copy of additional prints of the resource. Leaders in Beaumont should be familiar with the guidelines so that during neighborhood association meetings, they can answer questions when issues arise, and clarify confusion about the guidelines.

### ***Traffic Calming***

To implement traffic calming strategies, several things need to occur. First, potential stakeholders need to be identified. These would include: Beaumont Mills Neighborhood Association, Spartanburg Planning, Spartanburg Transportation and the local city council representative for the neighborhood. Other potential partners could include Spartanburg

Engineering, environmental groups, SCDOT and groups from Spartanburg County. Coordination between these groups will be needed to ensure that the sign project is completed fully and efficiently. The transportation department in conjunction with the planning department should determine the appropriate intersections to place signs along Liberty and Maywood, using data and analysis. They should then coordinate with the neighborhood association to inform locals, especially property owners on these intersections, of the upcoming changes. Transportation can then work to install each sign at the specific locations. Signs should first be implemented on Liberty St., because it is the most trafficked. Then if city analysis deems it necessary, should place signs along other designated roads.

The next step in the process should be to examine potential sources of funding. Fortunately, this project would have minimal capital costs. At roughly \$50 each, plus installation costs, with a total of 3-6 new signs, \$150-\$300 should be the rough cost of each sign. These funds could come from a variety of different places such as the planning budget, transportation budget or capital improvements budget. Since budgets are agreed upon the previous fiscal year, it might take 12-18 months to receive funding approval as a new line item. Yet, because the amount is so small, it should be able to be taken out of department general funds. Other revenue sources could come from donations from the community, or tapping into existing CDBG funds, or applying for a new grant completely. Because of the relatively low cost and installation process, the timeline for completing this process should not take long: 1-2 weeks to complete analysis to determine sign locations, 2 weeks to notify neighborhood association and other parties. 1 week to install signs at given locations.

## **Historic Beaumont Mill Village: Conclusion**

Overall, the Historic Beaumont Mill Village is a thriving tight-knit community that is an asset to the character of the city of Spartanburg. After meeting with planners from the City of Spartanburg and neighborhood residents, four major areas of improvement were identified: community image, a neighborhood pocket park, historic guidelines and traffic safety. These areas of improvement have been addressed in a variety of ways. Beaumont's community image is identified as an area of improvement because the neighborhood is secluded, unkempt at the entrance and lacking in historic designation signage. Increasing the outside landscaping and historic signage will help create a better sense of community and place that is currently lacking within Beaumont. Beaumont is also lacking in terms of a neighborhood park that meets the needs of all residents within the community. Adam's Park is located adjacent to the neighborhood; however, residents express a few concerns about this particular park. Lack of connectivity, safety concerns, and lack of amenities within Adam's Park justify the need for an additional neighborhood pocket park, as well as increased regulation in Adam's Park. A neighborhood pocket park that is fairly central, accessible, safe, and kid-friendly will aid in providing residents with the enjoyable park atmosphere they desire. Unfortunately, there is a difference of opinion in reference to the neighborhood's historic guidelines. Many Beaumont residents are not happy with the current historical guidelines. Certain individuals feel as though the guidelines are too strict or should not be in place at all. Educating and synthesizing current historic guidelines and policy will allow residents to make better informed decisions related to their properties. Design guidelines will allow residents to know what they are allowed to build and change on their historic properties. Finally, traffic issues are present throughout Beaumont. Planning for efficient traffic calming techniques will push out unwanted traffic and allow safer pedestrian travel.

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